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## The Swedish model of government administration

Sweden has three levels of government: national, regional and local. In addition, there is the European level which has acquired increasing importance following Sweden's entry into the EU.

At parliamentary elections and municipal and regional council elections held every four years, voters elect those who are to decide how Sweden is governed and administered.

### National level

At the national level, the Swedish people are represented by the Riksdag (Swedish parliament) which has legislative powers. Proposals for new laws are presented by the Government which also implements decisions taken by the Riksdag. The Government is assisted in its work by the Government Offices, comprising a number of ministries, and some 400 central government agencies and public administrations.

[The Riksdag \(Swedish Parliament\)](#)

### Regional level

Sweden is divided into 21 counties. Political tasks at this level are undertaken on the one hand by the regional councils, whose decision-makers are directly elected by the people of the county and, on the other, by the county administrative boards which are government bodies in the counties. Some public authorities also operate at regional and local levels, for example through county boards.

## Local level

Sweden has 290 municipalities. Each municipality has an elected assembly, the municipal council, which takes decisions on municipal matters. The municipal council appoints the municipal executive board, which leads and coordinates municipality work.

[Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions \(Website\)](#)

## European level

On entering the EU in 1995, Sweden acquired a further level of government: the European level. As a member of the Union, Sweden is subject to the EU *acquis communautaire* and takes part in the decision-making process when new common rules are drafted and approved.

Sweden is represented by the Government in the European Council of Ministers, which is the EU's principal decision-making body.

[Sweden in the EU](#)

## Division of responsibility between levels of government

The Swedish Constitution contains provisions defining the relationship between decision-making and executive power. The 1992 Swedish Local Government Act regulates division into municipalities and the organisation and powers of the municipalities and regional councils. It also contains rules for elected representatives, municipal councils, executive boards and committees.

The division of tasks between central government and municipalities has changed over the years. Activities have chiefly been transferred from central government to municipal bodies, *inter alia* for democratic reasons. In municipalities it is easier to maintain continuous contact between decision-makers and the private individual.

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The Government Offices  
SE-103 33 Stockholm  
Sweden  
Switchboard: +46 8 405 10 00

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